Damage to Post Offices Due to Earthquakes in Kutch

774. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of post offices / sub-post offices were destroyed/ damaged due to earthquakes in the disrict of Kutch;

(b) if so, the number thereof;

(c) the number of the post offices/sub-post offices out of above which have been got repaired/ reconstructed and started normal functioning; and

(d) by when the remaining post offices/sub-post offices are likely to be repaired/reconstructed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNCATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) And (b) Sir, 45 out of 67 Post Offices buildings — 13 departmental and 32 rented buildings — were damaged due to earthquakes in the district of Kutch.

(c) and (d) Repair work of departmental buildings was taken up in phased manner till date, out of 13 departmental buildings, 10 buildings have been repaired completely, one is under repair and pre- fabricated structures have been provided in respect of 2 Post Offices. Repairs to rented buildigs are to be unertaken by landlords. However, out of 32 damaged rented builidngs, the department has provided pre-fabricated structures in respect of 8 badly damaged buildings. Normal postal services have been restored in the earthquake-affected Kutch district.

Reduction in STD rates

775. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact the Government have reduced the rates of STD by around 60 per cent on 14th January, 2002 and whether this has improved the tariff and revenue in the telecom sector in many manner;

(b) if so, the details thereof;